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Iowa Learning Farms and ISU Extension to Host Field Day Aug. 25

By John Lundvall, Iowa Learning Farm

Iowa Learning Farms (ILF), Iowa State University (ISU) Research and Demonstration Farms and ISU Extension are hosting a field day at the ISU Agricultural Engineering and Agronomy Farm, near Ames, Aug. 25, from 9 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. The field day will feature strip-tillage and precision agriculture technology.

Attendees will be able to learn about all aspects of strip-tillage, network with farmers who have been using this practice, talk with experts about crop issues and see in-field strip-tillage and precision agriculture demonstrations. Admission is free and lunch is included.

With the implementation of strip-tillage, landowners and farmers should see better water infiltration, improved soil structure, and potential for reduced fuel, machinery and other crop input costs. Before planting (fall post-harvest, or spring pre-plant) a strip-tillage implement creates strips of tilled soil. Surface residue is left undisturbed between the tilled strips. Corn or soybeans are planted into the tilled soil strips, which warm and dry faster than the rest of the field, making this system ideal for some Iowa soil types.

Farmers wanting to plant continuous corn should consider the strip-tillage features of soil conservation, controlled wheel traffic and fuel savings. Farmers are producing top-end continuous corn yields with a single fall or spring strip-tillage pass. Guidance systems allow the farmer to control specific strip placement from year-to-year, either splitting previous year's planted rows or planting on top of the previous year's rows.

Field day schedule

Field day guests will rotate between two morning and two afternoon sessions. The morning sessions include Matt Darr, ISU agricultural and biosystems engineering department assistant professor, who will discuss and demonstrate precision agriculture technology and equipment and Mark Hanna, ISU Extension agricultural engineer, who will discuss strip-tillage equipment and take questions from attendees. Guests can also visit with several implement company representatives and see in-field strip-tillage demonstrations.

After lunch, ISU Extension corn agronomist Roger Elmore and ISU Extension plant pathologist Alison Robertson will be on-hand to answer questions of crop concerns. Attendees are encouraged to bring samples of ears or plant leaves so that these experts can better identify problems and solutions. The field day offers plenty of time for attendees to network and learn from soil and crop experts.

Alternate route

Due to reconstruction of U.S. Highway 30, access to the ISU Agricultural Engineering and Agronomy Farm on Aug. 25 will be re-routed. Organizers of

the event offer the following alternate directions because direct access to the farm from the Highway 30 is closed:

- Coming from the west, exit at Highway 17 east of Boone, travel south one mile to 240th Street (gravel), turn left and go two miles east to U Avenue, then north to the farm.
- Coming from the east, exit off Highway 30 at South Dakota Avenue near west Ames, travel south on South Dakota to 240th Street (gravel), go west five miles to U Avenue, then north to the farm.

John Lundvall is the Iowa Learning Farm field coordinator. He can be reached at 515-294-8912 or by emailing jlundval@iastate.edu.

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